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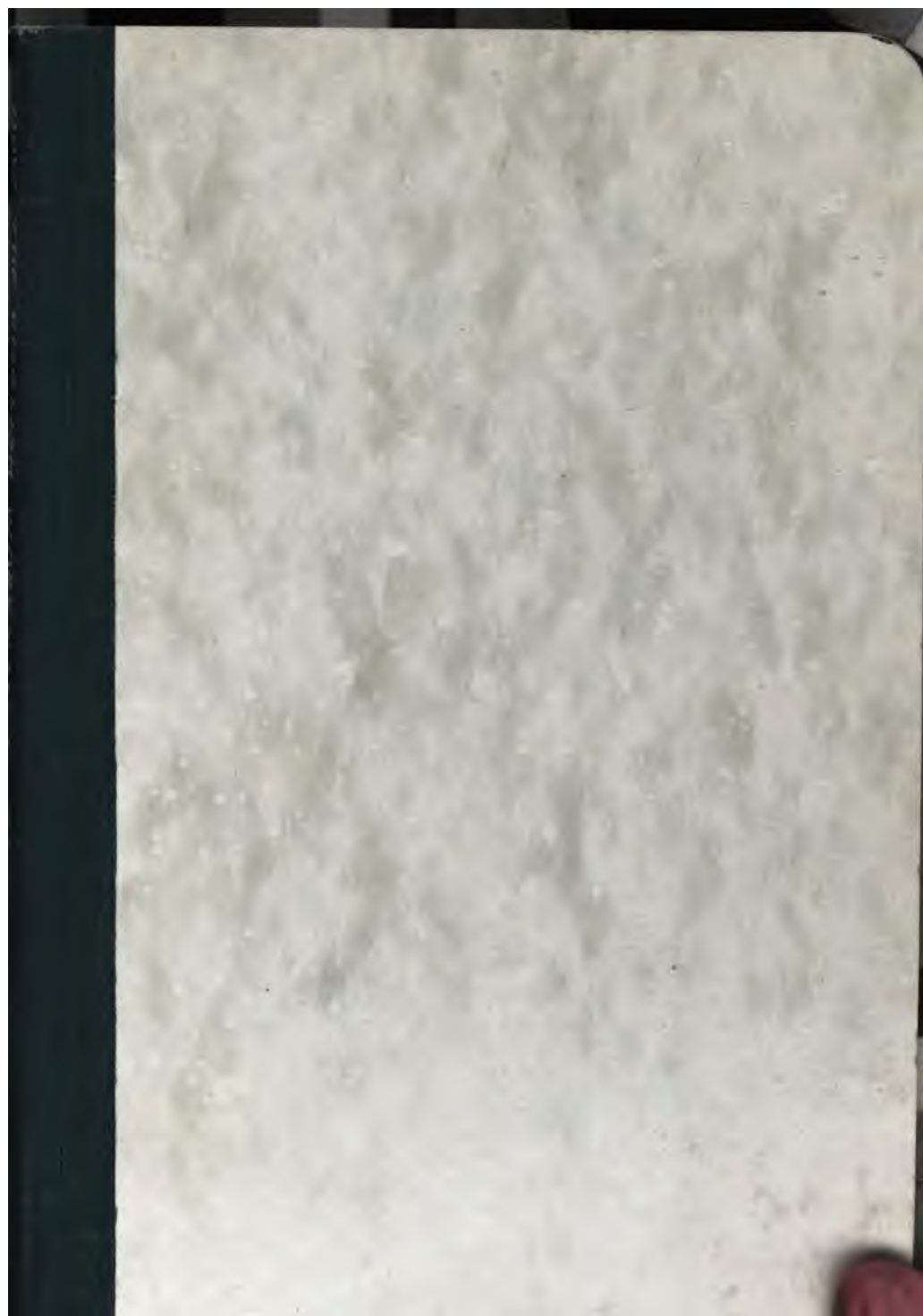
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HOW THE ENGLISH WORKMAN LIVES.

BY
A GERMAN COAL MINER
(*Ernst Dückershoff*).

TRANSLATED BY C. H. D'E. LEPPINGTON.

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PREFACE TO THE GERMAN EDITION.



THE greater part of the following observations have already appeared in the Dresden weekly paper, the *Volkswohl*. The Editor thinks, however, that they ought to be made accessible to a wider public. Although they may contain but little that is absolutely new to the student of English life, yet they exhibit the old in a new and characteristic light.

The author is a plain German miner, who has enjoyed no further education than that afforded by the elementary school of his native place in the mining district. Since then he has travelled much in Germany, and observed men and affairs with open eyes, and also with a considerable dose of the peculiarly German tendency to hypercriticise. The latter quality having brought him into conflict with the powers that be, he has turned his back on the Fatherland, and has sought a new home and a new sphere of work in England. Thither, too, the tendency to criticise has accompanied him, and to it we owe the contents of the following pages.

To the Editor our author's comments appear well worth taking to heart at the present moment, when a certain over-estimation of our position at home, both politically and socially, is unpleasantly conspicuous. The homely miner here shows us that we have in many respects, and especially, notwithstanding our much-vaunted labour legislation, in regard to labour questions, still much to learn from the English. And he does so, not from the standpoint of the fanatical partisan—for he seems to have left his animosity, along with his Socialist gospel, behind him in the Fatherland—but rather from that of his own personal experience. For this reason his words have a weight of their own not found in the works of specialists.

The reflections of the writer are here given in their unadorned freshness. May they not miss their mark!

(Signed) DR BÖHMERT.

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION.

ITS novel point of view constitutes the especial value of this little monograph.

Studies of working-class life have not of late been rare, but they have seldom been contributed by those who are actually living that life, or who belong to that class. Their standpoint has usually been an external one. Herr Dückershoff shares the life, and belongs to the class, and therefore he voices the feeling of workmen themselves towards the present conditions of labour, instead of the feelings which men of the middle and upper classes might entertain towards those conditions if they were actually subjected to them. Yet, writing for a German, not an English, public, he allows himself to accentuate positive ameliorations in the life of our masses with a frankness which an English writer, bent on reforming it altogether, might deem scarcely opportune.

It would be easy to join issue with a statement here and there, such as, for instance, that English women in general bake their own bread instead of buying

it from a baker, a practice almost unknown in the South ; or, again, that attendance at school is not compulsory. But such inaccuracies will be found, as a rule, to result from the error, extremely natural to a foreigner, of mistaking a part for the whole. The author has not unfrequently written English where, with wider information, he would have written Northumbrian. Generally speaking, however, his booklet displays the painstaking attention to detail no less characteristically Teutonic than the tendency to fault-finding remarked by Dr Böhmert.

The fact that the book is really a collection of newspaper articles is probably accountable for the repetitions which occur here and there in the original. It has been attempted to correct this failing in the present translation by an occasional omission or transposition.

C. H. D'E. LEPPINGTON.

HOW THE ENGLISH WORKMAN LIVES.

CHAPTER I.

MY EARLY LIFE IN GERMANY.

I, ERNST DÜCKERSHOFF, was born at Merscheidt, in the district of Solingen,* on the 11th of September 1858. From my sixth to my tenth year I attended the Roman Catholic elementary school at Solingen. My father, a master shoemaker, had contracted a chronic lung complaint through his occupation, and was not in a position to support us. There were six of us children. I, the eldest, was employed as errand-boy by several knife manufacturers. My

* Solingen is in the Rhineland, between Cologne and Elberfeld.—TR.

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first wages were two thalers† a week. I took great pride in being some little help to my parents. Later on my mother was also attacked by disease of the lungs. We were then left completely to ourselves. No one troubled himself about us. My efforts alone brought us in some money. In consequence chiefly of the treatment I had received at school and in play, there arose within me a rage against all who were better off than myself, which has not quite died out even yet. Love and friendship were almost unknown to us. Our parents were glad when we were out of the house. Outside we were made to feel our poverty by the sneers and contempt of the other children.

At twelve years old I was quite independent, and worked wherever I could earn the most. I had become a builder's handy lad at two shillings and threepence a day. The only word of praise I received

† Six shillings.—TR.

from my parents was when I brought home plenty of money on Saturdays. At the same time, I did not starve myself. After the war of 1870 there was no lack of well-paid work. Before I was quite thirteen both my parents died within three months of each other. I was the eldest of us six, and a free man. My two younger sisters, aged three and five, were taken by a very poor old widow. All at once I met with a number of friends, every one of them eager to persuade me to live with him. But I quickly noticed that it was my earnings, not myself, that attracted them. I sought for affection, but found none. I had been brought up most religiously by my parents, and I strove to gain peace through prayer, but in vain.

Suddenly my native place grew distasteful to me. I bade farewell to my sisters, and to my parents' grave, in order to see the world. At sixteen I was working, first at Düsseldorf, next at Cologne.

Thence I had a free passage to Strasburg as a navvy engaged on the extension of the city. There, at scarcely seventeen, I was earning five shillings a day as head workman. Lodging (without washing) cost me two shillings a week. I did not attempt to save. I made several excursions to Colmar, Basle, Mülhausen, and the Black Forest. When the job was over, I was sent to Liège, where a new colliery shaft was being sunk. I received seven francs (5s. 6½d.) for six hours' work, and paid three francs (2s. 4½d.) a week for lodging. A fortnight before Christmas 1877 I went into Westphalia, and was employed as hewer at the Pluto Mine and other pits near Bochum. Between 1880 and 1883 I fulfilled my military service in the 3rd Westphalian Infantry Regiment. From 1st October 1883 I worked in the Minister Stein Mine at Dortmund, and the next year I married. I was out of work during the strike of 1889 from May until Octo-

ber, when I was again taken on through the intervention of the authorities.

In 1890 the miners chose me as delegate for the Conference at Halle, where a German Miners' Federation was to be founded. Shortly beforehand a week's leave of absence was refused me, with the remark, "If you go to Halle, you will be discharged at once." This threat was put in execution on my return. Application at any of the pits was useless. Everywhere our names were black-listed. I certainly left nothing undone in the way of begging for reinstatement, especially for the sake of my family, but in vain. Nor could I secure a place at the "Union" in Dortmund, nor at the breweries where I applied.

In 1891 I was chosen delegate to the International Congress at Paris. Upon my return I was arrested on account of my report on the Congress, and detained in custody seven weeks pending inquiry.

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In June I was discharged, my wife having given birth to her fourth child, a daughter, during my imprisonment. I very often received notices of fines for disorderly conduct—as many as five in one week ; among them two for ten shillings each for brawling. In one instance, a policeman attempted to forbid me admission one Sunday afternoon to a meeting of the “Freisinnige Partei.” I thrust him aside, and went in, and the convener of the meeting—a lawyer—held I was in the right. On another occasion, several comrades were coming home about seven in the evening from a miners’ meeting in Dortmund. We were stopped by a large number of police, our names taken, and notices of fines issued. I was acquitted by the Court.

I now perceived that, under conditions such as these, I could no longer remain in Germany. I had been further condemned to seven months’ imprisonment for breach

of the public peace. Accordingly, I left Germany, and proceeded through Antwerp, London, Manchester, and Birmingham to Newcastle, without taking counsel of any German. Here the Secretary of the Miners' Union procured me employment in the Wallbottle Colliery at Lemington, and I enjoy the goodwill of workmen and mining officials. For twelve months I worked in good stalls,* then I received by lot a very nasty wet job. Disease of the lungs set in, and for eleven months I was completely unfit for work. Gradually my condition improved, and I can again do light work. But the burden of care has increased here in England through the birth of three more children. I have now seven children living, of whom the eldest is a girl of eleven years.

* The place where the hewer works the coal out with his pick is called his stall. The system of assigning the stalls among the men is explained at page 14.—TR.

CHAPTER II.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

NEWCASTLE is a town of about two hundred thousand inhabitants, famed for its manufactures and mining. The biggest factory is Lord Armstrong's, employing over thirteen thousand men. The houses are seldom more than two stories high. Those in the same street are just alike, but there is a great deal of difference between the streets themselves. Seen from a distance, the town is not a fine one, but looks like a congeries of houses ; less attention being paid to the external aspect here than in Germany. It stands high, and all around are hills and dales. The churches are very small. There are no such imposing edifices as in Germany, but they are the more numerous, almost every street having somewhere a little chapel hidden away

in it. The style of building is much the same in the outskirts as in the town itself; there is here, generally speaking, no distinction between towns and villages, nor between the dress of their inhabitants. The largest and finest buildings are public institutions, such as the Board Schools, the two Public Libraries, the Hospital, five Theatres, two Art Museums, and the Central Station. Among the philanthropic institutions, Armstrong has built and maintains a Technical School and an Elementary School, which are free to every one, and not to his workmen only. Besides this, Lady Armstrong has erected a Children's Hospital, one of the handsomest buildings in the city, and it is free to those without means.

Of the monuments, that to Stephenson, the inventor of the locomotive (the first was built at Newcastle), standing in front of the railway station, is the chief. Of the open spaces, two large children's play-

grounds may be mentioned. Of the spaces for the cattle, fruit, and meat markets, the two last are covered over, and closed at night. Within the town are ten or more small parks, and in the outskirts are three very large ones.

Communication is carried on by means of horse-trams, omnibuses, and cabs. The heaviest traffic on week days is near the docks. Ships from all parts of the world arrive here, bringing produce for inland districts. The docks are also the gathering ground for loafers and men out of work. The Tyne is comparatively a small river, though navigable for big ships up to Newcastle. Small vessels can ascend a few miles farther on the tide. It is spanned by three bridges, the middle one a real masterpiece in ironwork. It consists of two stages, the head of the bridge over the heads of the ships, while beneath their feet are the three-masters.

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The streets are comparatively empty between Sunday and Friday ; it is not until Saturday, and especially after closing time at Armstrong's factories, that they become crowded with people. Scotch and Irish are not very numerous here, but Russian Jews abound. In passing through the streets, one takes the impression that one has to do with a hard-working, kindly people.

I have never encountered a less healthy climate. Generally speaking, it is never either thoroughly summer-like or thoroughly wintry ; the weather changes not merely from day to day, but from hour to hour. The sun comes out very hot, and the next minute brings back the icy cold. Consequently, the foreigner, to his surprise, meets people in furs, or wearing thick overcoats, even in summer. The atmosphere is seldom clear, but usually thick and nasty, making breathing difficult even to the healthy. A foreigner has to go

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through all sorts of ailments on first settling here. The English always wear flannel underclothing.

On account of the changeableness of the weather, the crops do not thrive. The farmers grow wheat, oats, white cabbage, swedes, and potatoes. Rye is not met with. Fruit-trees are rare, and the few there are seem stunted. I have not yet seen a cherry-tree. Most of the land is pasture. Coal is the principal mineral. It nowhere lies very deep, so that it can be won without heavy outlay. Look where one will, one sees collieries in all directions. There are woods within twenty-five and twenty miles of Newcastle, but they are generally enclosed, and can only be entered when an excursion is made to them by arrangement with the proprietor. In clear weather there is a lovely view over hills and dales which stretch inland for many miles.

CHAPTER III.

THE CONDITIONS OF LABOUR IN THE MINING INDUSTRY.

THE position of the English miner is better than that of the German. That English workmen are not inspired with hatred of the propertied classes results from the fact that the employer is much more humane towards his workpeople here than in Germany. I may ask, with real astonishment, how is it possible that in Germany miners can be treated so roughly and brutally by the officials? In the pits here there is a spirit of comradeship. Every order is given and carried out in a friendly manner. Cursing and bad language are seldom heard; here it is a real pleasure to work. If one man cannot do a job, a second is sent for. Every one goes merrily to and from his work. The manner of an official when he comes

among the men especially impresses a German. His first question commonly is, "How are you getting on? Have you any tobacco?" or, "How's your family? Can you make anything at this stall?"

It is plain that these officials receive a fixed remuneration, not supplemented with premiums on the output of so much coal or the saving of so much timber. It is just these premiums which damage many a miner. The foreman does not trouble himself whether a man is lazy or industrious, or whether he earns ten shillings or only two. His rate of wages is not arbitrarily reduced. The harder he works, the more consideration he enjoys among his mates.

The penalising of objectionable individuals by giving them unfavourable positions in the mine is impossible here, because every three months the hewers' stalls are changed by lot in the following

manner. On the Friday afternoon before the beginning of the new quarter, three members of the Miners' Trade Union and three colliery officials meet in a place rented by the Union. The numbers and names, inscribed by these men, are then drawn by two school children under their supervision. The next Saturday evening each man removes his tools to his new stall, and then returns home. There is a fixed rate of payment by the piece, regulated according to the rise or fall in the price of coal. The English miner is allowed every convenience. Each hewer has a little bench, about the size of a footstool, which he can raise or lower to suit the position of the coal. He always works sitting, except where the coal is upright (*i.e.*, where the stratum is perpendicular). His chest suffers the less, since the left elbow rests upon the left leg, and so the upper arm, and consequently the chest, are not so much exerted. The ventilation

is very good, and, moreover, the pits in Northumberland and Durham are not very deep. The waggons are very small—three to a ton. Little ponies, not three feet high, drag away the coal. The hewer has simply to get the coal ; other men, paid by the shift, attend to the timbering and plate-laying. Places are reserved for the old people where they can earn as much as the younger men. There is something weird in coming across these old men of sixty or seventy in the stalls, with their snow-white hair.

Hours of work are very short. For hewers they are six, namely, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. ; and from 4 P.M. to 10 P.M. The average daily wage is five shillings and sixpence. Extra shifts are not worked. Friday in every fortnight is pay-day, and the next day is kept as a holiday.

Upon joining the Trade Union, each miner pays five shillings down, and

sevenpence a fortnight thereafter. He receives a card of membership, and, in case of a strike or of want of employment, gets twelve shillings a week if married, and five shillings if single. These are the only benefits. At each colliery there are three persons who receive complaints from the men, and a place is rented close by where all the hands meet once a fortnight. There grievances are considered, which are communicated to the management, and, if substantiated, a remedy is promptly supplied.

The English miner shows himself very considerate to feeble or elderly comrades. It is a sorrowful truth that in Germany it is all over with the miner who has passed his fiftieth year. Here again the Englishman proves himself equal to the occasion, for an "old men's place" is reserved in every pit for the elderly. It is usually a spot where the coal lies loose and is easily worked, so that these old people can earn

as much as younger men. I once worked alongside of them for three months. There were thirteen of them, the youngest sixty-three, the eldest seventy-five, and I really must say that several of them would have beaten a German miner between thirty-six and forty years old in point of activity. There is good reason why the English miner should be the older and stronger man of the two. He has time to rest properly, and he enjoys more meat than potatoes. Generally speaking, overstrain and under-feeding disable the German from competing with him.

If a pitman holds a good position for some months, he can earn very high wages. At the same time, the man who has a bad place can console himself with the hope of obtaining a better one at the next redistribution. The German does not enjoy this privilege. He is arbitrarily shifted from place to place.

The rate of piecework payment is fixed

every quarter. If a man gets a stall where piece-rate payment is unnecessary, he is free to take payment by time, in which case he receives five shillings for an eight-hour shift. Hewers, however, seldom adopt this method, they prefer to hope that the next quarter will bring better luck.

Regulations are put up everywhere, but are not, as a rule, signed by the men. They are not like German ones, and do not bristle with penalties. Every one, by entering the employment, undertakes to abide by the rules. The Trade Unions, as well as the individual employee, see that rights and duties must be reciprocal, for it is just the humane treatment practised by their employers which leads the men to exercise control among themselves, and to rid themselves of black sheep. Men are not punished for taking a day off. The giving in of one's name at the colliery is not required, Whether I give my real

name or a false one is all the same to employers and the police. It is behaviour alone which signifies.

Disputes with employers are mostly settled. Married men out of work get twelve shillings, and single men five shillings a week. Wages, and indeed everything concerning the workman, are regulated by the Union. Piecework wages and shift wages rise and fall with the price of coal, which is immediately reported to the hands at each colliery. Every miner is compelled to belong to the Union. Here is a case that I myself knew of. At the pit where I was working were fourteen non-unionists. They were called upon to become members, but were unwilling. The manager was requested to discharge them, but refused. Then it was determined by a secret vote to suspend work, and on Monday, at the end of the shift, notice was given by the entire body of miners, numbering 451 men. Then the

manager declined to accept notice, saying he would discharge the non-union hands, whereupon the latter declared themselves ready to join the Union. Each of them had to pay a ten-shilling fine, besides compensation for the expenses incurred. Whether employers are hostile to or in favour of the Union I cannot decide. They express no opinion upon it. The papers report Trade Union news just like any other. On the whole, the employer here takes considerable interest in his workpeople ; he is influenced, too, through the many religious sects, to one or other of which every one belongs. At the fortnightly colliery meetings officials are present, who bring forward complaints just as the workmen do, and this contributes much to a mutual understanding. An obsequious attitude towards their industrial superiors is foreign to English workmen. Notice of arrival or departure is not here given to the police.

The great yearly meeting of the Northumbrian Miners' Union takes place on the 1st of July by the sea at Blyth, sixteen miles north of Newcastle. It is regarded rather as a *fête*, the men coming by boat, omnibus, and rail, escorted by music. At this year's* gathering several Members of Parliament attended, including Messrs Burt, Wilkinson, and Burns, who addressed the meeting upon their parliamentary action. The meeting lasted from one o'clock till six, and several thousand pitmen were present, but no police. I could not but think upon my German fatherland.

Every Miners' Union holds such an annual meeting, when the members of the entire body come together. Tom Burt is the leader and representative in Parliament of the Northumbrian miners. An attempt is being made to induce the workmen

* *I.e.*, 1897.—TR.

throughout England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales to join the International Party of Labour. Tom Mann, an Englishman, is agitating for it here and abroad. He held several meetings in Newcastle and the neighbourhood in May (1897), and found many supporters. The next parliamentary election will decide how far the Socialist movement has progressed. As yet no opinion can be formed as to this, for all such matters proceed very quietly here.

In many places in the North of England strikes are breaking out, on a large or small scale, in various trades. No one is any longer content with his wages. The lamplighters of Newcastle have been on strike for more than four weeks because those of the neighbouring Gateshead receive two shillings more, and they wish to receive the same, instead of twenty-two shillings a week, as hitherto. A rise of a

shilling has already been granted, but the strike has not yet ceased.

I have watched the attitude of the authorities and the middle classes very narrowly, since I have experienced in my own person in Germany how differently the directions of the law are applied in dealing with workmen. A drunken lamp-lighter on strike was fined twenty shillings and costs for knocking a lamp down. In Germany he would perhaps have been sentenced to several months' imprisonment. A striker had to pay a fine of fifteen shillings for hitting a lamplighter at work. Such cases occur everywhere during strikes, and cannot be altogether avoided, but the German Courts and public prosecutors inflict the greatest injustice when they subject the workmen to too sharp a control.

The strikers no doubt exercise very stern compulsion among themselves. If they chance on a blackleg in the street, they throw rotten fruit all over him, or

they give a few pence to the street-boys to attend to him. A blackleg driver in one of the principal streets was reduced by such usage to leave his vehicle in the lurch and get out of the way, so that the police had to take charge of it.

With all this there is a sense of fun. It is looked at more on the humorous side, whereas there would be a resort to weapons in Germany, and then it would at once become apparent that the German people are split up into classes. The attitude adopted here is that what is right for one side is justifiable for the other side. Politics are not in question. There are only two sides in a strike—the strikers and their employers. Such hatred and mutual rage as in Germany is not to be met with. The capitalist employs the same means here as there, but he is not backed up in the same way by the authorities.

This was well seen in the North-Eastern

Railway strike. The committee elected by the men to treat with the directors consisted of five men, who were, on that account, dismissed from their situations without any ceremony. The consequence was an instant and general suspension of all work. A strike more dangerous for England could not have broken out. All Unions throughout the transport trades were prepared for the fray. The dockers joined the strike in a body. The strikers displayed the greatest energy. No one was allowed inside the stations who could not show where he was going. They drove from station to station urging their comrades still at work to join them, and with success. Goods traffic was partially at a standstill, and the railway connections were suspended. Had the strike lasted another two days, the train service throughout England and Scotland would have ceased. Forty steamers were lying in the docks ready to load, but all had been

previously provided for by the Unions. It was also a favourable opportunity for the dockers to strike. Work in the collieries was completely stopped. There was nothing doing in any pit for four days, because no waggons arrived. From all the large towns messages to the strikers were arriving, and the greatest sympathy prevailed among the railwaymen of England and Scotland. When one considers that England draws almost all her food supplies from abroad, it is evident how serious the consequences entailed by such a strike might be.

The railway directors were confident that, if the committee were discharged, the wages question would be shelved for a long time. People generally did not believe in the solidarity of the workmen. But by the second day of the strike the public began to realise the gravity of the situation. The directors now declared themselves ready to treat. A committee

of ten was chosen by the railway servants. The negotiations took the line that all the old hands should be reinstated, while those who had taken their places should be discharged, and that the questions of higher pay and shorter hours should be gone into after an interval of ten days.

Thus the strike lasted four days. The railwaymen are proud of their victory. The negotiations went on for some time longer, but the strike might be said to be ended. The North-Eastern men's Union had a cash balance of £100,000.

CHAPTER IV.

HOME LIFE AND HOUSEKEEPING.

IN my opinion, the workman makes and maintains a home more easily in England than in Germany. Of the latter country I can of course only speak from my experiences in the lignite districts. Where the pits are at a distance from the towns, rents are low, and every one has some land. For almost every workman likes a bit of ground where he may grow his own fruit.

It might be thought that a workman ought to be able, with diligence, to save a little. But, on the other hand, where living is cheap, wages are low. If the workman goes nearer the town, where wages are higher, he finds rent and provisions higher too; and if he wants to rent a piece of ground, the owner cannot put too high a price upon it. I have tried it every

way to effect some saving, but to no purpose. Wages are depressed through the influx of outside labour, and the workman simply wastes his energies. My monthly average in Germany was eighty marks (£3. 18s. 4d.). Here I received during 1895, according to the colliery books, £77. 11s. 7d. It must be admitted, however, that I was favoured, because I had to fetch my wife and four children out of Germany. The English miners like a little land too, but they do not care to turn to gardening at the end of the day's work; now and then one finds one with a bit of kitchen garden.

I know well that I can make something out of two years' work here, for saving is easy to a German where it is hard to an Englishman, because the latter makes more demand upon life. The chief advantage of all is the cheapness of flour. If everything else is wanting, at least one can always get bread.

A miner's meals are much as follows,

He gets up about eight o'clock, and breakfasts on bacon or brawn, with a couple of eggs, and bread and tea. He takes a couple of slices of bread and meat or cheese with him to the pit. On finishing the shift at four o'clock, he has meat and pudding, or soup and eggs or meat, and for supper bread and cheese or meat, with tea, the kind of meat always changing.

Provisions are usually procured in large quantities. A few days before pay-day the big tradesmen send round for orders to the pitmen's houses, for they all buy their provisions at shops doing a large trade. The orders are booked, and, an hour after pay-time, the tradesmen's heavily laden carts draw up at the miners' houses. Each receives what he has ordered, and pays on delivery. None of the shops open before nine o'clock, and most of them are closed by five, except on Saturdays. The tally system in use between many German tradesmen and workmen is not adopted

here. Every one pays on the spot for all articles, drinks included. This strikes me as a very good thing, for giving credit always ends badly for the workman, who generally buys more than he can pay for, the shopkeepers protecting themselves either by charging high prices or by selling inferior goods. Many German tradespeople indemnify themselves out of the workman's goods and chattels. If he has saved enough to furnish his house nicely, but has got into difficulties through some unforeseen occurrence, the tradesman readily gives him credit at first, but sticks to the furniture in the end. The German exerts himself, as the English workman does, to get together a decent home, and he is proud of having a big waggon-load of furniture when he moves. But if one inquires after the fine furniture in five or six years' time, one finds it has fallen into the hands of the bailiffs. The workman is not sufficiently protected in this respect, and the

things he has won by his sweat are continually in danger of coming under the hammer.

Dwellings are so constructed here that there is not space for a great quantity of furniture, and the principal articles are built into the rooms, and no one has a cellar or a stall. House removals may be witnessed any Saturday, and a pony-cart amply suffices to convey all the possessions of the average workman. Landlords, however, run no risk of losing their rents, because they are paid weekly in advance. I pay mine fortnightly in advance, which suits me better than the quarterly payment in vogue in Germany. Though the Englishman has not much furniture, yet he knows how to give his apartment an air of comfort and prosperity. Their spare time impels them to contrive things to smarten their homes. What I have related is true. Every German who has settled here will confirm it. I have talked

over the subject with many Germans round about, and have often received the answer, "Germany is all very well if one has English money to spend in it."

A Northumbrian workman's yearly income is much higher than in Germany, and living expenses are lower. Wheat flour costs from tenpence to eighteenpence the stone of fourteen pounds. Every family does its own baking. I with my wife and four children use two stone of flour a week, at a shilling the stone, for bread. Three of the children go to school, and consume a great deal. Beef varies very much in price. The best pieces, cut in thin slices, cost eightpence a pound; the inferior pieces range down to $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. The best pork, and pickled pork, is sixpence, and inferior pieces $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. to fivepence a pound. Fresh eggs are twopence to threepence each; pudding eggs cost the same as in Germany; while fresh vegetables

and potatoes are dearer. Milk is three-pence a quart. Clothes cost the same as in Germany, except some kinds of working clothes. Thus, what is called "English leather," such as masons wear, is very cheap; trousers can be bought of it for five shillings which would cost ten in Germany.

The rent of a three-roomed flat on the first floor would be £5; of a whole house, £12. 10s. to £15. Each let has its own door, even on the second floor, and the good custom prevails of knocking first and waiting to be invited before going in. Many houses have a little flower garden in front. Rent is paid fortnightly or weekly. The principal diet consists of bread, meat, and tea. Generally speaking, the condition of the labourer is better, and necessaries are cheaper, than in Germany. No German who is in work here has any longing to return.

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The following is a price list of provisions in Newcastle :—

Wheat-flour	. per stone	10d. to 1s. 6d.
Beef.	. per lb.	3½d. „ 8d.
Mutton	. „	4d. „ 6d.
Corned Beef	. „	... 6d.
American salt pork	. „	3½d. „ 6d.
American lard	. „	... 5d.
Beans and green peas	. „	1½d. „ 2½d.
Salt in the block	. „	... ¼d.
Rice	. „	1½d. „ 2½d.
Fine sugar	. „	1d. „ 1½d.
Loaf sugar	. „	... 2d.
Currants	. „	1½d. „ 2½d.
Raisins	. „	2½d. „ 3½d.
Tea	. „	1s. „ 1s. 6d.
Butter	. „	1s. „ 1s. 4d.
Margarine	. „	5d. „ 1 1d.
Dutch cheese	. „	... 5½d.
Bar-soap	. „	1½d. „ 2½d.
Soda	. per stone	... 6d.

The English housewife is not fond of hard work. She does not like carrying from shop to house a basket or parcel above ten pounds in weight. If she wishes, it is sent home for her by the shopkeeper. As a rule, she has not to work very hard

indoors, and yet everything is cleaner than in similar houses in Germany. There is no scrubbing. The parlour, kitchen, and stairs are covered with carpet or oil-cloth, and the same may be said of other things which in Germany would be scoured several times a week with soap and soda.

English cookery is expensive, because the Englishwoman does not understand preparing food as a German does. For instance, in Germany, peas, beans, lentils, cabbage, or carrots are cooked with the meat, and there is a change of vegetable from day to day. The same vegetables, as prepared here, cost more, and do not taste as nice as good German potato soup. But the German can turn out an appetising meal on less than an Englishwoman needs. Puddings made of rice and flour are much eaten. A change of meat is made daily. Englishwomen bake their own bread, and understand how to do so better than many German bakers. As

bread is the staff of life, a baking takes place every week both of tin loaves and of cakes of various kinds. Rhubarb pie is much eaten, and is very palatable. Since workmen are, as a rule, abundantly blessed with children, who, as everybody knows, are great bread-eaters, it is no small advantage to be able to bake so cheaply. The oven is on the spot, and an extra scuttleful of coal is the only outlay required.

Laundry work, which is the heaviest of all for the German housewife, is made easy to the Englishwoman. Almost every working-class family has a wash-house, and the washing is done thus :—The dirty linen is steeped in cold water overnight, wrung out next morning, flung into a copper, soap and soda thrown in, and boiling water added. Then it is thumped for ten minutes with a mallet similar to the potato-mallets used in Germany, weighing six or seven pounds, and having a handle and four notches at the thicker end. The

linen is then taken out, brushed, again boiled and thumped, and then it is clean. If the mallet is too heavy, a steel spring a foot long is tied with a string to the ceiling, and the mallet attached to it. Then one has only to press downwards, the mallet flies up of itself. A cleaner and easier washing cannot be imagined by any German housewife. At the same time, as bleaching is not customary here, the better off, as well as the working people, have to hang their linen to dry in the street, thereby affording the neighbours an opportunity of forming their own opinion of them.

Indeed, it is over their washing that neighbours in the same street become acquainted with each other. Should one of them, however, preferring to "keep herself to herself" (to use the English working woman's own expression), try to dry the linen at the fire, it might pass unnoticed once or twice, but by the third time it would have become known all over

the place, and the neighbours would pursue her children with questions. But the relations between working-class families are more friendly than in Germany, just because each family's dwelling is self-contained.

Most of the working-class women are too lazy to sew, although all girls must learn it at school. A stranger who did not understand how matters stood would be astonished, in walking through the streets of a working-class quarter between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, to find two-thirds of the women unwashed and uncombed, with their clothes pinned, instead of properly stitched, together. He would mistake them for squalid, dirty people, which they are not, for he would find their homes very clean and tidy, and nicely furnished. The German dresses more simply and neatly, and is much more industrious. From her youth upwards the Englishwoman is not brought up to

hard work, because it is not indispensable. Even as a servant she has not had to work hard. Families of this class make more pretension, both in their diet and in their homes, than do Germans. Therefore, since payment by instalments is largely adopted, very good furniture, and even valuable musical instruments, are to be found in many houses.

The children in working-class families, which are commonly pretty large ones, try to make themselves useful in their leisure time by making foot-mats. Ends of old carpet are cut into small strips, a finger long and an inch wide, and a piece of coarse sackcloth is pinned down over a square lattice frame. The child pricks holes in the sackcloth with a piece of pointed wood, through which the rags of carpeting are pulled and fastened together at the two ends. In this way all sorts of names and figures can be worked out by the children with very little trouble accord-

ing to designs chalked out for them. Six children can work at one of these mats, which are sold in the shops at four and sixpence each. Many families use old woollen rags cut small for making mattresses.

Again, with regard to house accommodation, the workman is better off in England. I have been impressed by the contrast with Germany. Many colliery and factory proprietors own dwellings which are let to their employees rent free. When a pitman does not live in one of these houses, an allowance is made him for rent, and he is supplied with fuel gratis.

No doubt, working-class quarters here present a mean appearance. Englishmen generally attach but little importance to handsomeness in their buildings, but the interiors are all the more comfortable and convenient. Wherever a number of cottages are built together space is reserved

for a playground. This is unknown in Germany, where every scrap of land must bring in money, be the consequences to others what they may. Here, on the contrary, I have been in many of these quarters, and I always meet with a playground. Wherever games are going on, there is some one to lead them, who also collects the children's pence. The teachers, too, watch the playing after school.

I have visited numerous "Arbeiterkolonien" (*i.e.*, working-class quarters), the external aspect of which is much superior to that of similar dwellings in England. The interiors, however, frequently appear very dismal, whereas a certain degree of comfort is observable in every workman's household here. The people may even be said to enjoy a competency, since they need work for food and clothing only,* and have no other necessities to meet. They

* Miners living in cottages owned by their employers have no rent to pay.—Tr.

like living in these settlements, and do not care to move away. One meets with families who have lived for twenty, thirty, or forty years in the same house. In Germany, every decent working-man despises the colonies, and, if he gets into one, loses something of his independence. Besides, they are chiefly inhabited by foreigners. A playground is unheard of. To the proprietor of the colony the children are simply a reserve of manual force; he takes, too, no interest in his colony, whereas the English proprietor exhibits an interest in every family. Thus, a shareholder in the estate where I live is very popular because he has helped many families when they have been in distress.

All respect to the proprietors here, for they regard the workmen as fellow-creatures rather than as commodities. Even when conflicts arise, yet, once they are over, the old relations are resumed, which is not the case in Germany.

Now as to the plan of house construction. The street I live in has eighty-three house-numbers. Each house is built for only two families, and each tenant has his own number. Thus there are two numbers, two front doors, and two back doors, to every house. On the lower floor there is a front room four yards long by five broad. The stairs are in this room, and take a yard off the breadth of it. The back room is five yards square. Both rooms are twelve feet high, and can be heated, the stoves being built into the wall. The chimney takes up two yards of the side, leaving two corners occupied by cupboards, used for clothes, china, and kitchen ware. The front room is usually the bed-chamber, but both are slept in if the family is a large one. The kitchen scullery is a small projecting room at the back, three yards long by two and a half broad, with a little window, and containing a big copper, holding half-a-dozen bucketfuls of water,

used for cookery and laundry purposes, built into the inner wall, and a water-tap and sink against the outer wall. A table a yard wide, running along the wall between the sink and the copper, is used for washing up and for brushing the clothes. The way to the back is through this kitchen. The upper story is similarly planned, except that a little landing projects over the steps. The back yard is six yards square, walled in, and contains a coal-store for each tenant, and a water-closet common to both. There are no garrets, and there is no cellar, so that nothing can be stored. This is the one thing wanting in these dwellings.

The lower flat lets at five and sixpence and the upper at five shillings a week, and the rent is collected and notice given weekly or fortnightly according as wages are received. The landlord or his agent calls for it from house to house. Rates and taxes are included in it, but a person

who rents the whole house has to pay the poor-rate, which falls due every six months. In some streets the windows project veranda fashion, and each let is provided with a bathroom, which costs sixpence or a shilling extra in rent.

The English workman likes a quiet home, and so people with large families prefer to live on the ground floor, in order to avoid disputes on account of the children. Older houses, two or three stories high, with front and back entries, exist still in the principal streets, and three rooms on the same floor can be rented in them at two shillings a week. Five or six families can live in such a house, but the English are trying to get rid of them as fast as possible.

And now to sum up my opinion on these points. German women are harder working and more frugal than English women, and understand household work better. But workmen's dwellings here in England are serviceable and healthy, and family life

is generally very fine. In consequence of higher earnings and better house accommodation, there is less domestic wrangling than in Germany. There I often lived with six or seven families in the same house, so that, when the husband comes home from work, his supper is spoiled for him by tales of disputes with the neighbours' wives. I often wondered why the children became so brutalised in such houses. Here in England I find the explanation. If all that the children hear from their parents is the bad language evoked by the crowding of so many families together in one house, as well as the difficulty of ways and means, then the workman has not much time left to devote to his youngsters. People in Germany talk glibly of the roughness of the labourer, but forget the causes which give rise to it.

If now I inquire how it has come about that an English workman's life is as comfortable and prosperous as it is, the answer

must be that it is because the workmen themselves all stand fast together. When compared with a question of wages, every other consideration is of secondary importance. I have arrived at the firm conviction that the time is not far distant when all workmen, as well as those that are interested in their welfare, will see that it is only by a calm and well-considered course of procedure on the part of the entire world of labour that anything is to be achieved. It is a pleasure to recognise that many evangelical pastors are frankly adopting an attitude sympathetic to the workman's view of labour questions.

CHAPTER V.

THE TREATMENT OF CHILDREN.

UNLIKE Germany, where children must be in school by seven or eight o'clock, here the mother may sleep on until eight, for the hours in all the elementary schools are from nine till half-past twelve in the morning, and from two till half-past four in the afternoon daily, Saturdays excepted, when there is no school. Everything is free, books, slate, and pencil included, which are returned to the teachers at closing time. School age begins in Germany at six, but in England at five, and a child may be sent to school on its fifth birthday, instead of on a fixed day in the year, as in Germany.

With regard to compulsory attendance, several School Board visitors are appointed, each with a district of his own. When

one of them meets a child of school age in the street who is not attending school, he takes it to the parents, and requests them to send it to school. If still it does not come, it is fetched. There are penalties for non-attendance, but they are seldom enforced. As the parents send infants of two or three years old to school with their other children, one of the female teachers has to act as nursemaid and look after them.

A boy or girl who possesses the requisite knowledge and is so inclined can become a teacher. There are seven standards in the school, of which the seventh is the highest, and is conducted by a teacher who also supervises all the other classes. Children of indigent parents get a breakfast of bread and tea at the school. The school managers act hand in hand with the Guardians in relieving such families. Moreover, the boy or girl who has reached the age of twelve can be released from

school, if wanted at home, upon passing an examination. Various religious denominations have schools of their own to which the children may be sent upon payment of a penny a week each. The State schools are, as has already been said, free.

Children are nicely dressed, for the workman is properly proud of his bairns. On a Sunday they are not to be distinguished from those of the well-to-do. A great deal is done for them. Almost all attend Sunday school, and during the summer joint excursions are arranged by these schools, generally on Saturday afternoons. Thus, my own children took part last summer in two such expeditions, one by boat on the North Sea, and the other by rail to a farm fifteen miles from Newcastle, where all kinds of amusements, such as boxing and running races, were indulged in. Everything went on in the open air, and bread and tea were provided

for them all, a big kettle forming part of our equipment. A choir accompanied us. It was a great treat for the children.

On one side of the large public playgrounds already referred to are swings and gymnastic fixtures for the girls, and on the other side a big football green for the boys. These places, which are thronged, are looked after by a man in uniform, as are also the parks. They are all kept in order by the municipality. Plenty of excursions are also got up by the numerous workmen's associations.

To note one more instance of kindness to children, several benevolent societies in Newcastle resolved in October 1896 to give shoes and stockings to three thousand poor children who were to be selected by the school teachers. I must say, nothing better could have been fixed upon, for it is very difficult in large working-class families to replace the shoes worn out in playing with preserved meat tins in the streets.

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It may truly be affirmed that the greatest attention is here paid to the welfare of the children ; and where this happens, the welfare of the grown-ups will certainly not be neglected.

CHAPTER VI.

SOCIAL LIFE, AMUSEMENTS, AND INTER-COURSE WITH OTHER CLASSES OF SOCIETY.

THE middle and the working classes are on very friendly terms. This is because they are brought together in clubs and religious organisations ; and then, too, there is the general equality. In Germany class distinctions are everywhere apparent both to the eye and to the ear. The hotels and taverns afford the best example of this, with their separate rooms for officials, for commercial people, and for workmen. There are extra rooms in English taverns also, but any one is free to use them. As to Germany, I could give hundreds of instances in which, often unwittingly, the workman is given to understand that he may mix only with his equals.

Again, I have had to do with both

officials and workmen in many localities in Germany, and I have been disgusted to notice how well people understand how to sham. Since I have been in England I have realised more clearly the extent to which hypocrisy is carried in Germany. To begin with the workman. He must often pretend to be content, that his wages are ample, and that he himself is religious and patriotic. The official has too often to sham in his dealings with the workmen. Sometimes he tells them to work for a bonus merely to get as much as possible out of his subordinates. He can hardly have an independent opinion. He can only deal with the workmen as an official, for therein lies his prospect of advancement. So the police, and even the pastors, have often to sham, if only from concern for their own interests. Whither will this system lead?

The middle as well as the working classes hold together much more strongly

in England. In Germany every section expects to receive legislative protection. It is otherwise here, where business men, like workmen, help themselves by combination. This results from the keen feeling of solidarity everywhere in evidence. "Equal rights for all" is a maxim common to both classes. As much cannot be said for Germany, especially where workmen are concerned, which is all the more pity, since the two classes belong together. Even the workmen are not united among themselves. If one has a better coat than another, at once a silly pride obtrudes itself, creating a feeling of estrangement within the class. The direct opposite prevails here, where mutual help is the rule, for Englishmen know well enough that strength lies in union.

Sunday is a complete day of rest. All public entertainments cease ; everything is closed except the churches, and excepting

also the taverns, which latter are open between half-past one and half-past two, and between six and ten o'clock in the evening, but are by no means crowded. Every opportunity for attending prayers or hearing a sermon is given without having far to go. In the immediate neighbourhood are several mission halls, or one can turn in at one of the neighbouring workmen's houses, for many have prayers at home. Several sects hold open-air services in the evening, the chief part in proceedings of this kind being played by the Salvation Army. To watch the behaviour of these people for the first time makes a strange impression on a German. No opportunity is afforded here for enjoying oneself otherwise than by going to church, or else stopping quietly at home. I can confidently assert that the Englishman comes to his work on Monday morning fresher than the German.

The young people spend their spare time during the week in all kinds of games, football being the chief. One is astonished to see how nimbly the legs move. The ball is usually a foot in diameter, bound with leather, and flies sixty feet high or more when well kicked off. The old people sit at home and read the paper or a book, or one finds them outside, standing or sitting in the same spot for a couple of hours, till one thinks they must be waiting for somebody.

I believe this football playing to be very wholesome for the body, for the English workman's limbs continue supple to an advanced age. Even boys who can only just walk play the game with the empty meat tins with which the streets are plentifully strewn. The pleasure a father of these youngsters naturally takes in watching them enjoying themselves is somewhat lessened by continually having to replace the shoe leather worn out in such games.

Lastly, I must repeat that the English workman is bigger and stronger than the German, and can work quickly and uninterruptedly during his short shift. Frequently he stands on a higher level educationally.

Intercourse in clubs and societies is cordial and friendly. These are as numerous as the sects. A stranger feels himself attracted by the warm reception that greets him on all sides. At the meetings every one is anxious to promote the corporate growth.

In Germany it is otherwise. Intercourse there is superficial, and one encounters cliquishness, pettiness, selfishness, and scandal-mongering. The various political newspapers rail or sneer at the proceedings in the Unions. Drink does a great deal of mischief. A workman who wishes to discuss the improvement of his condition in a meeting after his week's labour requires before all things a calm frame of mind. But

a single glass of beer makes him merry, and then it is impossible for him to think quite clearly. At the third or fourth glass the landlord is pleased because his till is filling, and the workman is pleased because his courage is rising. For the moment he is ready to vote for anything, but gradually he has to admit to himself that what he has been so boldly voting for cannot possibly be carried out. So far as he is concerned, the meeting has been a failure. Besides, the trading classes establish similar associations for trade purposes, which leads to drinking.

Many German business men have a contemptuous sneer for the man who attempts to convince them that they have a duty towards the workman. What is the rude and stupid labourer to them? Many are so insolent as to fancy that they are conferring a benefit on him by finding him a day's job, and that he ought to be eternally grateful. If he has made a little

money, and his wife spends it on new potatoes or a new dress, then the tradesman's wife puts her down as extravagant or conceited. Horse-flesh is much too good for the labourer in the eyes of many middle-class people. They magnify his failings while overlooking their own much greater faults. He needs help which is not afforded him, and has to put up with insults and injustice. They never consider that they are daily wounding his feelings, knowingly or unknowingly, although they are ready to complain of the brutality of the working classes the moment a tipsy labourer has the boldness to use bad language to them. Intercourse between the two classes is here on a different footing, where the middle classes recognise that the lowest labourer is entitled to the same rights as they are, and support him in his efforts to improve his condition. Everywhere they aim at making it as comfortable as possible.

The German tavern-keeper plays the chief part at meetings and festivities, for he indeed draws direct advantage from them. Workmen's meetings are preceded by drinking, and many of those who take part in them hardly remember the next day what occurred at them. The wives see their husbands set out for such gatherings with anxiety, for they foresee the consequences. No doubt this usage prevails also among the higher classes, but an alteration is needed, especially in the interest of the workmen, because they are the chief sufferers from it. They cannot, indeed, altogether dispense with the tavern-keeper when they hold their meetings, but the all too frequent merry-makings might be avoided.

English landlords do not keep saloons, or, when they do, the saloon has to be hired for assemblies at a heavy sum, since drinks may not be served in it. There are fewer dances in consequence,

although one or other of the clubs will give a ball during the summer, and advertise it on large posters; but then two or three shillings admission is charged for each couple, and the dancing seldom goes on later than eleven o'clock at night. It takes place on a Saturday—the day of pleasure—never on Sunday, which is exclusively a day of rest, though excursions are occasionally made on it. I should add, however, that I saw a dance held this summer in a mission hall, but I could see no harm in that. Pleasure-making is of a harmless character, and takes the shape of outings and of all sorts of games with balls. A German, who thinks he cannot get through his Sunday without a dance and its attendant drinking, would here be condemned to simply rest, but he would soon find himself all the better for it.

Here all the workmen's societies have their own rented offices where they hold their meetings, and where spirituous liquors

are not drunk. If some one wants a drink after the meeting has ended, he goes to a public-house for it. The unionists employed at a certain colliery lying within the town of Newcastle have, however, been unable to secure any place, except a tavern, where they could pay in their contributions. I was present on one of these occasions. A room, six yards long by four broad, having three entrances, was used. One door led into the bar, another into the street, and the third into the back yard. The first was closed while contributions were being received, and not a glass of beer was to be seen. I thought on Germany. There assuredly the door into the bar would not have been shut, and every man would have had his glass of beer in front of him. Without that nothing can be done in Germany. But I can testify that the English workmen, with their moderation, fare the better.

The principal races in Northumberland take place on June 24th, 25th, and 26th. Only an eye-witness can form any idea of the interest taken by English people in sport. During the three race days all business in Newcastle was suspended at mid-day. All, whether rich or poor, streamed towards the racecourse. The uninitiated will not readily detect the great underlying motive, which is betting. Long beforehand the names of the horses entered are published in the papers, together with the prizes they have already won. Groups are formed, both among the well-to-do and the poor, for mutual betting. For instance, I bet five pounds that the horse "Wina" wins, and I look out for a partner who will stake the same amount against the horse.

Of course there is no lack of cheating, but thousands of people take part in the betting without the owner of the horse knowing anything about it. Many, even miners, bet on the racecourse among them-

selves by tossing up a coin, and this is the most honest way. As lotteries are forbidden in England, people resort to betting in order to get rid of their money. The well-to-do classes bet to the tune of hundreds of pounds. Germans certainly do not squander so much money on such play.

But all is sport in England. It is sucked in with the mother's milk. I have often witnessed quarrels among workmen. If two of them wish to fight, whether drunk or sober, they challenge each other, throw off their jackets, and turn up their shirt sleeves, and then it is "Come on." At once a big crowd of onlookers forms around who act as umpires. Woe to him who would use a weapon! The combatants box until one of them falls. Then they generally make it up and go off together to drown all ill-will in a drink at the nearest tavern.

The police understand all this so well that they are never to be seen at these fights, which generally come off on Satur-

days. They are generally looked on as sport by the spectators, who urge on the combatants till their eyes are blackened.

Practically toppers and devotees of tobacco are the only taxpayers here, since almost all the outgoings are covered by the taxes levied on drink and tobacco. Whisky costs three shillings a pint, and tobacco four shillings a pound. A drinking bout which would cost two shillings in Germany costs a man ten shillings here, and if he be also a great smoker, he cannot afford to live well, notwithstanding his high wages. A toper ruins his entire family.

Drunkards are as plentiful here, I believe, as in Germany. Among women they are more numerous, in spite of the many temperance societies. The privileges here conceded to women to a greater extent than in Germany are abused by many of them, for they frequent the taverns just as

the men do, and drink until they cannot walk, and their husbands have to take them home. Then follows a row, and the police have to interfere. Topsy women are as plentiful as tipsy men on Saturday nights. At first sight this disgusts a German, but in time he gets used to it. Taverns are so constructed that one may drink without being noticed by the other customers. The numerous pawnshops, too, where everything may be pledged to the very last article, facilitate the habit.

English working women often do not understand how to cook a decent meal, but they do understand how to drink whisky. I have observed things which would be held impossible in Germany. Here is a sample.

Not far from me there lives a workman in a blast furnace with five children and a wife aged thirty-five. She was lately found, in the street dead drunk and taken to the police station. Then the home was

searched, and everything was found in a disgraceful condition. An old bed, a chair, and fifty-one pawn-tickets were discovered. The children, two of them twins of a year old, were half naked and filthy ; these the police at once took away. It was proved at the trial that the wife had already been twice convicted of drunkenness, the second time getting a week's hard labour. The husband, a sober, hard-working labourer, stated in evidence that he allowed her two pounds ten shillings a fortnight, but that he scarcely ever had a proper dinner. He was very fond of the twins, and had lately bought them clothes and shoes, which his wife had forthwith pawned and drunk the proceeds. She received the heavy sentence of six months' hard labour. As she was being removed, she cried out to her husband, "When I come out I will murder you." In another family, living near, the wife drinks the money her husband gives her to pay the rent.

Certain it is that more women than men are addicted to drink. Female factory hands are mostly toppers. The effect upon their morality may be imagined. Married women, when in liquor, solicit. One cause, no doubt, is the dearth of employments for females. The secret drinking is worse than the open drinking. The English workmen themselves say that things are made too easy for the women.

German women are in very good repute, and, were it not for the difference in language, many a girl would find a good opening over here.

A greater quantity of spirits, as well as of beer, is drunk in Germany than in England, but less money is squandered upon them, for it costs five shillings to buy the same amount of spirits here as could be purchased in Germany for eightpence. Plenty of workmen there will go into the town on pay-day with a big jar, and have it filled with four or five quarts of spirits to last

them till they receive the next fortnight's wages, and for this they pay four shillings. They would certainly open their eyes if they had to pay thirty shillings, as in England. This high price prevents spirits from being bought in quantity. At the last parliamentary election, it was stated on the electioneering placards that the State received £5,000,000 a year from the excise on spirits.

In general intercourse the police, middle classes, and workmen are all on a footing of mutual friendliness. The constable carries a truncheon two inches thick and two feet long in his pocket, so that it cannot be seen. He is on duty for eight hours, and his wages rise from twenty-one to thirty shillings a week. Many of them do not carry any pencil or paper for making notes about with them. Drunkenness is the commonest offence.

Meetings may be held at any street

corner. This right is made use of principally by the sects, and the English are so used to it that they seldom stop to listen, though the Salvation Army has generally a good many listeners on account of the music.

In personal intercourse the English are polite and friendly, especially towards women and old people. The workman is not recognisable by his dress. Trousers are worn wide enough to make two pairs for a German officer. Laced shoes with low and very broad heels are worn. One meets many people in the streets who have cut the upper leathers of their shoes in order to make more room for their toes. The Englishman studies the practical in his work, his clothes, and his home.

Buying and selling are always going on everywhere, especially on Saturdays. Even heather is bought to wear in the button-hole. Since Sunday is a complete day of rest, and all the workpeople have

their Saturday wholly or partly free, every shopkeeper makes it his business on that day to attract as many customers as possible, either by puffing his wares or by dressing his windows smartly. But not only shops are busy, for poor people run by hundreds about the streets selling things. A quiet observer can learn a good deal about trade among them. Saturday is like a German fair day.

Selling from door to door is not hindered here, as it is in Germany, by the police. A pedlar's license costs five shillings, and enables the holder to sell his wares all over England. Many families help themselves in this way while out of work in the winter, by making all sorts of things at home, and then hawking them from door to door. Anything that has green leaves is bought in the winter by rich and poor to stick in the button-hole.

Purchasers at shops habitually pay for their articles on the spot, and have them

sent home. A German is at first suspicious, doubting whether his purchases will really be sent after him, for he recollects some disagreeable experiences in his own country. But suspicion soon gives way, for he is not taken in. A foreigner, however, is often overcharged.

CHAPTER VII.

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS.

BUT little of the proceedings of the London Socialist Congress was reported in the local papers. I was informed by the leaders of the Miners' Union that they sympathised with the conclusions of the Congress so far as they were not of a political character.

Trades Unionism and politics are kept distinct in this country. It would be to the disadvantage of the working classes themselves to sever themselves in the matter of politics from the middle classes, since the attitude of the latter towards the workman has been friendly. This has been proved in the hard conflicts which have of late years been fought out in favour of the workmen. Peaceable co-operation between the two sections of society has turned the scale in favour of the labourer, and it is

thanks to the middle class that his position is more advanced than in other countries. In all that concerns his well-being he is himself consulted. If the working classes broke loose from the middle classes, and attempted independent action in politics, a class hatred would result, to the detriment of both sides.

I am personally aware that very wealthy *bourgeois* participate in Trade Union movements, give them material support, and even act as delegates. Some served in that capacity at the International Miners' Congress, and many Germans who were also present doubted whether the English representatives were really miners. The majority were so, but the similarity of costume, and the like sturdy build of body, made the two classes indistinguishable. Consequently, the German miner can hardly be blamed if he finds himself in doubt whether such workmen as those of England are really comrades of his own

who have known how, by stern struggle, to raise themselves physically and mentally, and to win the respect of the middle class.

Socialistic ideas have already spread considerably in England. I am confident that in a few years' time Social Democrats will be as plentiful here as in Germany, but of a milder type. Still I do not believe there will be a hard struggle, because the law is pretty much the same for all alike. It is just this freedom which predisposes the workmen to calm reflection. So far as the miners' leaders are concerned, the men have great confidence in them, and they deserve it. They are well informed as to the state of the industrial market, and explain it to the men. English workmen do not attack capital itself, but only the misuse of capital, and the exploitation of workmen by the capitalist class. In point of economics, the English workman is in advance of the German; in point of politics, he is behind him.

For a week before the last election the candidates made the greatest possible show. I am certain that two waggon-loads of paper must have been used up in placards. Whole books were printed, full of candidates' promises. In one that I received, the candidate opposed the importation of various German goods, and the products of German prison labour were represented and described. The Englishman takes less interest in the elections than the German, and as a rule is guided by the opinions and decisions of the Trade Unions, at whose meetings (which take place every fortnight) the political as well as the material position of the workman is discussed. I do not see here such scandalous proceedings at election times as in Germany. The polling place is at the school, twenty paces from my house. Our Social Democrats wear red slips, and there is a similar custom here. Red is Liberal, blue Conservative. A great deal of nonsense was played with these

colours, which were tied on cats, dogs, horses, and little children. No tavern was used as a polling station, but schools and empty houses hired for the occasion. No voting tickets were given at these places. The electors had to obtain them at the committee rooms of the respective candidates. But voting tickets were placed by the Liberals in several taverns, and whoever took one of them was given a couple of glasses of ale or some whisky. The poll was heavier than usual on the last occasion.

The highest and the best here is the freedom which every Englishman prizes above all else. Here every one can speak out what comes to his lips. *Lèse majesté* is not recognised. If it were, a third of all the workmen in England would find themselves in prison. Notification of public meetings to the police is unknown. All that the workman has to do with the authorities is to give notice of births, mar-

riages, and deaths. The doctor sees to notifying infectious diseases. The policy of repression pursued, on the other hand, in Germany, segregates and embitters the workman. He trusts no one who is not a workman. He reads Socialistic papers and literature, and the more they revile the propertied class the better he is pleased. Besides, every workman knows that he is everywhere shadowed by the police, and that the heaviest penalties often follow upon the smallest transgressions. If this course continues to be pursued in Germany, it is my firm conviction that events will follow the course they took a century ago in France. England is at least fifty years ahead of Germany.

That the workmen have attained a great deal through their political solidarity is shown in the curtailment of working hours in England as compared with the rest of the United Kingdom. No doubt Northumberland and Durham enjoy the shortest

working day of any in Great Britain. It is much longer in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, being in some pits as much as ten hours. The Miners' Unions in these three countries are very weak. The natives are indifferent, and look for help from the English, so that the working day may be fixed by law at eight hours from bank to bank, for it would be impossible for them to force on the eight-hours day by a strike.

But even here the relations between labourers and capitalists are becoming less settled and more hostile. The capitalists fight with the same weapons as in Germany, but they have greater awe of public opinion, which usually sides with the workmen. It does not enter into the heads of the men wantonly to begin a strike; but if it cannot be avoided, then it is conducted with an obstinacy only possible to organised labour. Considerations of religion or politics have nothing to do with it. Strikes

in England are a very sharp sword, for they last long, and the entire community suffers under them. The workmen do not lightly declare a boycott, because the firms affected would probably be ruined. Therefore whatever might lead to such measures is avoided.

CHAPTER VIII.

WORKMEN AND THE RELIGIOUS AND BENEVOLENT WORLD.

THERE is some truth in the remark, often repeated in Germany, that sects are as plentiful in England as sand by the sea-shore. There is, however, a reason for this. If they merely prayed and preached on Sundays, they would long since have become ridiculous. But every Christian must take off his hat before the practical vigour they display on behalf of the poorer classes. The greatest part of the distress occasioned by economic conditions is alleviated by these religious bodies, who know very well, as an English minister, himself formerly a miner, once said to me, that hunger is not to be appeased by prayer alone, unaccompanied by material help. Each one of their members is in some

sense a missionary. A family that has fallen into unforeseen trouble is promptly assisted. It is the women who here exhibit astonishing activity, for their quick insight enables them to discover at once what is best to be done. This love of one's neighbour is shown, not only by women of the working and middle classes, but by well-to-do ladies, who do not hesitate to bring help into the labourers' homes, thereby securing for themselves the sympathy of the working class.

When, as frequently happens, a family is reduced to poverty through the drunkenness of the man, it is nevertheless assisted, in order to save the wife and children. Efforts are not spared to bring the man himself back to better courses, and they often succeed. It does not lie in the English character to reform such people through the use of harsh language, but rather by exciting within them a sense of shame. Many are thus reformed, and

led to take the pledge, and so their families are saved. But there are also, unfortunately, many others who are unhelpable. Still, these congregations contrive to prop up the wife and family, while leaving the husband severely alone, which he usually feels more than the severest punishment.

These sects assist, not their own members only, but any necessitous person so far as means will allow. When these fail, the poor-rate is drawn upon, without inflicting on him too much running about, or other disagreeables. All goes on upon a footing of friendliness.

The denominations also look after cases of sickness and confinement, take care of children, and help to tide over periods of unemployment. They have considerable means at their disposal, as the wealthy interest themselves in such matters. People in Germany would laugh to see a lady intervene between a labourer and his

employer, but it is not at all uncommon here. Ladies of very good standing do so, and that their action is appreciated by the men comes out in conversation among themselves. The sects strive to outdo one another in the exercise of practical Christianity. Women preach in all the churches and chapels except those of the Presbyterians and Roman Catholics. The sermons, however, are not so elaborate as in Germany, and the services consist more in singing and narrating experiences, especially in connection with intemperance. The women are particularly clever in describing these, not without touches of humour. The Sunday schools, too, work on practical lines, inasmuch as they inculcate in the children a regard for others. Christianity concerns itself here with works, not words. Were not religion treated from this standpoint, the people would not concern themselves about it.

In numerous districts the workmen have expressed a wish for free* medical treatment and free drugs for themselves and their families. Every workman must, indeed, in Germany belong to a sick fund, but he is compelled in consequence to employ the doctor appointed by the management of the fund. Unfortunately, many doctors adopt an attitude towards sick members which provokes justifiable resentment. I could quote many instances from the Rhenish-Westphalian manufacturing district where surgeons have treated their patients roughly. This grievance has been sufficiently censured in the German papers, but it will never be redressed until members can choose their medical attendants for themselves.

Here there are no privileged apothecaries, as in Germany, but only druggists'

* "Free," *i.e.*, instead of the official system now in force in Germany, to which country the author is here referring.—TR.

and chemists' shops. In many establishments, sixpence is kept back from the employee's wages by the management to provide him with free doctoring and medicine. The doctor makes up the prescription himself. There are besides "doctors' clubs"—a kind of free sick fund. One can select a club in whose doctor one has confidence, and for sixpence a fortnight obtain treatment and medicine for one's self and one's family.

In addition to these, there are the two great public institutions, the Dispensary and the Infirmary, both situated in the heart of the town. Whether they are supported by the State or by the municipality I do not know. Everything is supplied gratis; patients need only provide gallipots. A person wishing to avail himself of the Dispensary applies to the pastor or other officer of his church, who is provided with printed forms in which the applicant's name and address are filled

in. He then takes it to the Dispensary, which is open from nine till two daily, except Saturdays. He waits in a large room, full of benches like a school, until his turn comes, when he passes into a smaller room. There his out-patient's letter is entered in a book, and he is given another form, and the officials introduce him to one of the seven or eight doctors in attendance. The doctor examines him and fills up a prescription on the form. This the patient takes back into the waiting room, in which are two little ticket-windows, like those in German booking-offices. He gives the prescription in at the first window, and receives it back again, with the medicine, at the second window. This occupies a long time, often two hours. Frequently two hundred patients have to be attended to. The prescription form continues in force three months, and can be subsequently made up at any chemist's. Cases of severe illness

are passed on at once into the hospital, sometimes without any certificate.

That both these institutions are most beneficial for the labouring classes is proved by the colossal use made of them. All workmen avail themselves of them in long illnesses, although they may belong to "doctors' clubs" or friendly societies.

A Children's Hospital may also be mentioned, which stands in high esteem with the workmen. I had a child of my own, four years old, lying in it for a long time, so that I had opportunities of seeing everything. The building looks as fine as a palace outside, and is finer still within. To right and left are large wards. In the centre of the second floor is the refectory for convalescent children. All imaginable toys are to be found there. Eatables, however, may not be introduced. One is astonished, on entering the wards, to see great pyramids of flowers. All along the

walls are the little yellow cots of the children, who are all dressed in red flannel. The hospital accommodates a hundred patients.

Among institutions for the general welfare the following are especially to be mentioned :—Public parks and playgrounds, public baths and washhouses, and public reading-rooms and lending libraries. The working classes avail themselves of all these institutions to a very great extent, but particularly of the lending libraries, of which Newcastle possesses two. In them one may read newspapers from all parts of the world, and also borrow books without any payment. It is all gratuitous. I am especially delighted with them, and I am sure that every German workman would make use of them.

The grand system of insurance against sickness, accidents, infirmity, and old age, existing in Germany, is wanting in England. Here the labourer is at liberty to

organise insurance for himself, but if he fails to do so—and many do fail—then, in case of sickness, he is taken to the Hospital, into which all are admitted without payment. The Hospital is at the same time a medical school, and always has forty or fifty students.

Cripples are frequently to be met with, who support themselves by begging because they have long since spent the money they have received as compensation, and can make no further claim. Employers, however, take the greatest care to keep on crippled men in their employment, who would have been classed as entirely unfit for work in Germany. There are four one-legged men working in my own colliery. One has lost his right arm and right leg. Another has one leg and a crippled hand. They are engaged in picking the stones out of the coal.

The Board of Guardians has a very

difficult task in the absence of compulsory insurance. Women are chosen, and entirely justify their election. My own experience of the Poor Law has been briefly as follows :—In consequence of my ignorance of the local organisations for insurance against sickness, I had joined a sick club only three months before I fell ill, and I could not be in benefit until I had been a member for six months. During six weeks of my illness a lady visited me, who acquainted herself with my circumstances, and paid ten shillings back rent. Then the relieving officer came and summoned my wife to attend the Board meeting, which took place daily at noon. Here accurate knowledge was displayed as to my affairs in Germany, as well as of my conduct during my employment as a collier at Newcastle, though how the information had been obtained remains a mystery to me to this day. I received seven shillings and sixpence a week for four months, with

medical attendance and medicine. Then I was granted nine shillings a week for eight more weeks. But every effort was made to be rid of me, for the doctor said I might live long, but could never get better. As a German, I could not blame the English authorities, for they have enough native poor to deal with.

Poor Law administration is less public in Germany than here. The relieving officer is known to all the world for miles round. He has nothing else to do but to visit the poor weekly, and to pay them the relief granted by the Board. Every person in receipt of relief who has a child of school age receives a book in which the teacher enters the attendances made by the child during the week. The book must be produced at nine every Saturday morning, when the relief is distributed. The relieving officer has an understanding with the schools and all the religious bodies, so that he is accurately informed

as to the circumstances of all indigent cases. The check of the school attendance book compels parents to send their children to school, which many of them might otherwise neglect to do. Attendance at school is not enforced here as it is in Germany.

If a man's mode of life has been so bad that out-relief is refused, then the whole family has to go into the workhouse, where husband, wife, and children are all separated, and where they are allowed to go out only once in three weeks. Any one may be freely received into the workhouse. Even children who have been taken up by the police are taken in there. To many the restraint is so distasteful that they prefer to beg, which is permissible in England, provided that one is singing. Hence it is common to meet a man and his wife and two or three children singing in the streets. Tramps are admitted up to ten o'clock

at night, and receive a supper of bread, and a pint of gruel and a piece of bread for breakfast. For this they must chop wood or break stones for two hours. The workhouse is often full to overflowing. I myself have never been in it, and can now work again.

THE END.



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